

## Travelling with CF

Planning is necessary for anyone travelling, however when travelling with CF, there will be a few more things to take into consideration to ensure things go as smoothly as possible.

### Reciprocal Health Care Agreements

The Australian Government has agreements with certain countries to cover some essential treatments and medicines. If there is no [reciprocal health agreement](#) with the country you are entering, you should:

- Ensure you are well before you enter into that country.
- Have a plan should you get sick e.g. travel home quickly or to a country that has a reciprocal health policy.
- Take plenty of precautions e.g. be strict with hand washing and hygiene.
- Take out health insurance. If you only get general health cover, and not cover for CF, and you require medical treatment there, it could be very expensive.

### Travel Insurance

There are a range of insurance companies that will cover CF, however they do seem to change and people have varying success rates. Some people have found that an admission within the past 12 months has affected their success. You may need to apply through various companies and supporting documentation from your CF team may be helpful. To cover your health, you will need to seek out insurance that covers a preexisting health condition.

#### Tips when seeking insurance:

- Call and ask different travel insurance companies whether they will cover CF.



- It may be worth asking online for recommendations from other people with CF who have travelled recently.
- Get a letter from your CF specialist with details of your state of health, a list of your current medications and your treatment plan to assist you.
- Ask your travel agent or an insurance broker if they can get you covered.
- [The Insurance Council of Australia](#) can work to assist you if you have questions about gaining travel insurance with a pre-existing health condition.

#### Travel insurance companies who have previously covered people with CF are:

- |                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| • 1 Cover               | • Cover More     |
| • Allianz Direct        | • HCF            |
| • All Clear             | • Medibank       |
| • Aussie Travel Cover   | • QBE            |
| • Australian Post       | • RACV           |
| • City Bond Sure Travel | • Southern Cross |
| • CGU                   | • Tick Travel    |
| • Columbus Direct       | • World Nomads   |

## Health Preparation

It is important that you have a full health check with your CF team prior to travelling. You will be able to discuss areas of concern and ensure you are in the best health possible before travelling. You should also:

- Obtain prescriptions for medications you will need whilst away.
- Get letters from the clinic explaining diagnosis, medications including those nebulised; especially if requiring a compressor or insulin, and possible treatments for an exacerbation. Copy these and prescriptions and leave in several places.
- Take your CF clinic contact details with you.
- Research the location of the local CF clinic at your destination. Please note, travel nebulisers are available for loan in some states. Check with your CF organisation.

## Medications

It is important to make sure you have all the required medications you will need throughout your trip prior to travelling, as some countries may not stock particular medications. It is suggested to take an extra one-week supply in case of unavoidable extended delay. Pack medications and prescriptions in your hand luggage and an extra supply in checked baggage and keep them all in their original packaging. You should also notify the airline well before travelling if needing to use any needles or other devices on the plane. If you have medications that need to be kept cool, you may need to look into purchasing a good pharmaceutical grade ice pack for long distance travel. The FRIO cooling wallet is a good option.

## Flights

Oxygen levels on flights can be reduced so it's important to discuss this with your CF team to see if this is something that might affect you. If oxygen is required, it needs to be requested at least two weeks in advance from the airline. Your CF clinic can assist with this. Wheelchairs are also an option and can be made available by the airline if given adequate notice. Allow extra time to check in if this is required.

## Eating, Drinking & Infection Prevention

Water and food precautions are important when travelling to reduce the risk of infection. It is important to:

- Follow good hand hygiene by regularly washing your hands and using hand sanitiser.
- Wear a mask when moving through crowded places like airports.
- Use bottled or cooled boiled water if unsure of local drinking water.
- Avoid ice cubes, juice mixes and other sources of possible contaminated water.
- Take electrolytes or salt tablets in hot climates.
- Wash all fruit and vegetables with a safe source of water or eat fruits with a peel.
- Avoid food from street stalls and kiosks.
- Avoid non-pasteurised foods e.g. milk, yoghurt etc.
- Watch alcohol intake as it may make antibiotics ineffective.

## Useful Resources

- [Planning Ahead](#) (CF Foundation)
- [The CF Traveller's Guide to Nutrition](#) (NEMO)
- [CFTalk Adults: Travel](#) (CFWA)
- [Smart Traveller](#)